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Tillman Award Given to Business Student, and Other Graduation Stories

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Tillman Award Given to Business Student, and Other Graduation Stories

Quick Facts

- Patel expects to enter an M.B.A. program in the fall, possibly at Winthrop, in order to work in international trade and relations or for a business consultancy firm.
- Patel was one of about 270 students given their degrees at the ceremony. Some graduates from August also participated.



Lisa Patel



Karen Gilson



Travis and Traci Pauls

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Senior **Lisa Patel** received the Tillman Award at Winthrop University's fall commencement exercises on Dec. 18 at Winthrop Coliseum.

The **Tillman Award** is the university's highest academic honor. Established in 1940 to honor former S.C. Governor Benjamin Ryan Tillman, the award recognizes the graduate who has most consistently met the demands of academic excellence. Patel, who is originally from Birmingham, England, earned a bachelor of science degree from the College of Business Administration in three and a half years. She studied international business and has traveled extensively in Europe, Asia and Africa.

A member of Alpha Lambda Delta, a national honor society for high-achieving freshmen, and Beta Gamma Sigma, the national scholastic honorary society for students of business administration, Patel is an avid fan of soccer. She expects to enter an M.B.A. program in the fall, possibly at Winthrop, in order to work in international trade and relations or for a business consultancy firm.

Patel was one of about 270 students given their degrees at the ceremony. Some graduates from August also participated.

Among other students graduating on Dec. 18:

• **Karen Gilson's** mother was diagnosed with lung cancer in the summer of 2006 and passed away in November. "Throughout my mother's illness and after her death, I received numerous e-mails of concern and support from Dr. (Merry) Sleight, associate professor of psychology. Her first priority was my emotional and physical health, followed by offers to assist me in completing my coursework for her class." Gilson said Sleight didn't know that she had decided not to continue her education. But something happened, Gilson said. "I suddenly realized that if she had not given up on me then perhaps I should not either and that I at least owe her the courtesy to finish the classes I had started. She had nothing to gain from me, as she was not my academic advisor nor someone with whom I had a previous relationship; she was simply an educator doing what great educators do." Gilson earned her bachelor of social work degree on Saturday and plans to pursue her

master's degree at Winthrop.

- Twins **Traci and Travis Pauls** of Blackville, S.C., graduated together. The two were in a car accident in December 2007 on I-77, a wreck that left Tracy in a wheelchair. She returned to Winthrop in 2009, earning a general communication disorder degree with a minor in biology. Traci will undergo physical therapy this summer in Atlanta, Ga., before heading to graduate school . Her brother, who majored in sociology and minored in psychology, is interviewing for jobs and hopes to attend graduate school to work in student life or student affairs.
- The first three **McNair Scholars** – **Shanequa Bryant** in biology, **Brandi Jefferies** in early childhood education and **Alfie McCloud** in economics – graduated this December. The program, named for the late astronaut Ron McNair of South Carolina, helps first-generation college students get into graduate programs.

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